TSUNAMI RELIEF AIRLIFT

SOUTHEAST ASIA

January 2005

Operation Unified Assistance

On Dec 26, 2004, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck
the Indian Ocean off the western coast of Sumatra.
It created a tsunami that devastated the coastal villages of Southeast Asia, killing more than 160,000 people.
The wave swept through, indiscriminately destroying
the lives and livelihoods of millions of people.

Within 24 hours, U.S. military planners were setting
the stage path for relief assistance. Within 36 hours,
U.S. aircraft were launching for Utaphao, Thailand, on a mission to save lives, mitigate suffering and provide relief assistance to the region.

The worst devastation that nature can inflict ..

SHARP

… and the best of humanity from the world’s resp

"Airlift operations enabled the American people to rapidly extend a helping hand to those affected by this disaster."

– Maj. Gen. David A. Deptula,
Joint Force Air Component Commander

USAF C-5, C-17, and C-130 airlift flowed into the theater carrying millions of pounds of relief supplies. Using the hub-and-spoke method, the heavy lift aircraft delivered relief supplies to central drop off areas such as Utaphao, Thailand where they were trans-loaded onto medium lift aircraft which delivered the supplies further into the devastated areas. From these areas, helicopters were used to deliver the supplies.

The airport at Banda Aceh is a flurry of activity as tsunami relief efforts progress on Jan. 13. After food and cargo carried by Elmendorf's airlift squadron is offloaded, US military members transport it to waiting helicopters that will deliver it to more remote locations. *(Marc Lester / Anchorage Daily News)*

Senior Airman Ronald Bacon finishes a maintenance check on one of Elmendorf's four C-130 aircraft operating from Jakarta, Indonesia, on Jan. 10. The Air Force team is operating from a base of the Indonesian military, or Tentara Nasional Indonesia, commonly referred to as TNI, at Jakarta's international airport. (Marc Lester / Anchorage Daily News)

U.S. Navy Seahawk helicopters land in a soccer field to bring food and water to victims of the Tsunami. (Photo by photographer's Mate 3rd Class Katrina V.

Over 15.75 million pounds of humanitarian relief delivered by the United States military in the first two weeks of response

USAF HH-60 from the 33rd Rescue Squadron, Kadena AB, deliver relief supplies to Galle, Sri Lanka. (Courtesy Photo)

Military and non-governmental agency workers, sort and stack donated relief supplies at the Banda Aceh, Indonesia airport. (Courtesy Photo.)

Air Force security forces personnel stand watch to ensure safe-keeping, protection and orderly delivery of relief supplies. (USAF Courtesy Photo)

Without forklifts, off-loading of relief supplies requires a human-chain assembly line of U.S. Air Force personnel and humanitarian aide workers

(Above) U.S. Air Force airmen load food and water onto an aid flight bound for Banda Aceh, at Halim Air Force Base in Jakarta, Indonesia. (Courtesy AP)

(Right) Members of the Mobility Support Team in Banda Aceh, Indonesia
Help unload supplies bound for

A USAF C-130 delivers relief supplies at night to Indonesia. (Courte

More than 18,000 Airmen, Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, and Coast Guardsmen work together to deliver relief in support of Operation Unified Assistance

Aid workers and military members unloaded supplies and equipment during Operation Unified Assistance assisting the hundreds of thousands of survivors with water, food and medical attention. (Courtesy photos)

Tech. Sgt Keith Kolb, an aerial gunner from the 33rd Rescue Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, flies over Sri Lank aboard an HH-60 'Pavehawk" helicopter during relief operations for tsunami victims in on Jan. 12, 2005. The Kadena Airmen are helping transport food, medicines and supplies to affected

U.S. airmen and volunteers unload much needed water from a shipment that arrived from the U.S. Air Force's 517th Airlift Squadron Friday, Jan. 7, 2005, at the airport in Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh province in northwestern Indonesia. (AP Photos/Wally Santana)

(Above) A Spanish Red Cross water purification trailer is taken off an MC-130H Combat Talon II at Banda Aceh by Aerial Delivery Support Branch specialists. (Photo by MSgt Michael Farris)

(Left) Along with fellow crew members and Thai military, Navigator, Lieutenant Seefeldt 36th Airlift Squadron, Yokota Air Base, Japan unloads two cargo pallets of water after landing at Phuket Airport in Thailand. (USAF photo by SSgt Cohen A. Young)

“I will tell you that the combined support force and its partners here are making a real difference today.”

– Lt Gen Robert Blackman, USMC, Commander, Combined Support Force 536

Airman 1st Class Emily Starcher, right, a flight engineer from the 33rd Rescue Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, assist Sri Lankan citizens load vegetable inside her HH-60 'Pavehawk" helicopter on Jan. 12, 2005. (Photo by Master Sgt. Val Gempis)

UNCLASSIFIED

A Naval officer from USS Abraham Lincoln Strike Group carries an injured young boy from a helicopter to a triage site setup by various relief groups on the Sultan Iskandar Muda Air Force Base in Band Aceh, Sumatra. U.S. Navy photo

Two Navy aircrewmen carry a seriously injured, stranded Indonesian woman to a helicopter so they can transport her to a medical facility where she will receive medical attention. Photo by Photographers Mate Third Class Gabriel Piper.

(Above) A young boy and his mother await transport from Banda Aceh, Indonesia to Jakarta aboard a USAF C-130.

(Right) A young girl hugs a teddy bear she was given by a USN Sailor.
(Courtesy photos.)

Over 7,030 passengers who had everything destroyed carried in the early weeks of Operation Unified Assistance to be relocated with friends and relatives .

(Above) Staff Sgt. Jamin Ose, 92nd Security Forces Squadron, inspects baggage prior to loading refugees onto a Kadena C-130 at Banda Aceh Indonesia on Jan. 6, 2005. (Photo by Tech. Sgt John M. Foster)

(Left)A young girl holds a can of juice while awaiting airlift from Banda Aceh aboard a Kadena C-130, Jan. 6, 2005. (Photo by Tech. Sgt John M. Foster)

Victims of the tsunami board a USAF C-130 aircraft to fly from Sultan Iskandar Muda Air Force Base in Banda Aceh, Indonesia to Jakarta, Indonesia. (Photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Benjamin D. Glass.)

A young girl looks out of the window of a USAF C-130 en route to Jakarta, Indonesia. (Courtesy Photo)

Tsunami victims await transport via C-130 from Banda Aceh, Indonesia to Jakarta. For many affected by the tsunami the only family they have left reside in Indonesia's capital. (Courtesy Photos)

Fifteen nations contributed military personnel and aircraft to Operation Unified Assistance

Airmen from the 734th Air Mobility Squadron, deployed from Anderson AFB, Guam load U.N. humanitarian aid/disaster relief supplies aboard a Japanese Self-Defense Force C-130 Hercules at Utaphao AB, Thailand. (Courtesy Photo)

A Japanese pilot discusses where to offload cargo brought in on a JASDF C-130 with a member of the Mobility Support Element at Banda Aceh, Indonesia. (Courtesy Photo)

U.S. Marines, talk to with local Indonesian military personnel while in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. (Photo by Photographer's Mate 1st Class Alan D. Monyelle.)

A Royal Thai Airman Makes a radio call while Forces await the download Of a U.S. AF C-130.
(Courtesy Photo)

Indonesian military members Take a break from unloading an Sorting delivered relief supplies
(Courtesy Photo.)

A U.S. Air Force C-130 pilot talks to Indonesian military representatives at Banda Aceh, Indonesia. (Courtesy Photo)

Relief supplies await sorting and distribution at the airfield at Banda Aceh, Indonesia. (Courtesy Photo)

Smiles greet relief workers and U.S. military personnel as aid is delivered. (Courtesy photo.)

A salute is rendered by an Indonesian child as a U.S. helicopter lifts off after delivering food and water. (Photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Jordon R. Bee)

A young Indonesian boy smiles after receiving a teddy bear from a U.S. Navy sailor. (Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Philip A McDaniel.)

Indonesian children pose with a Navy aviator after relief supplies were delivered by helicopter to the camp. (USN Courtesy Photo)

“There’s a lot of talk about how some in the world don’t appreciate America. Well, I can assure you that those who have been helped by our military appreciate America.”

— President George W. Bush.

"You can't open up the lens of a camera wide enough to appreciate what is being done to help these countries." **– Lt Gen Robert Blackman, USMC**
Commander, Combined Support Force 536

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